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BIG PHARMA NEWS WATCH

Fewer Americans Now View Childhood Vaccines as Important: Gallup + More

The Defender's Big Pharma Watch delivers the latest headlines related to pharmaceutical companies and their products, including vaccines, drugs, and medical devices and treatments. The views expressed in the below excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender. Our goal is to provide readers with breaking news that affects human health and the environment.

by The Defender Staff

AUGUST 7, 2024



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Fewer Americans Now View Childhood Vaccines as Important: Gallup

The Hill reported:

Fewer U.S. adults today say it is important to get **children vaccinated** than in recent years, according to a Gallup poll published Wednesday.

In **the July survey**, only 40% of U.S. adults said it is “extremely important” for parents to vaccinate their children, a marked decline from the 58% who said the same in 2019 and the 64% who said the same in 2001.

The drop over the last two decades is similarly stark when tracking the combined percentage who said vaccinating children is either “extremely” or “very” important. Taken together, 69% of U.S. adults hold this view now, down from 84% in 2019 and from 94% in 2001.

Docs Should Start Getting Ready for Upcoming Respiratory Virus Season — Updated COVID Vax Coming Soon, Not Too Early to Pre-Order Vaccines, CDC Director Says

MedPage Today reported:

Physicians should start preparing now for the upcoming respiratory virus season, according to the **CDC** in a webinar hosted by Bruce Scott, MD, president of the American Medical Association (AMA) on Tuesday.

CDC director Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH, reviewed vaccine recommendations for the 2024-2025 respiratory virus season. Everyone ages 6 months and older should get an updated **COVID-19** vaccine and updated **influenza** vaccine, Cohen said.

Cohen recommended that practices consider appointing a vaccine champion to streamline office vaccination protocols. “That really helps to make sure your office is set up and prepared for having conversations with patients about vaccination as well as not missing an opportunity to give out those doses,” she noted.” So every time someone walks into your office, it’s an opportunity both to have that conversation and to make sure you’re immunizing.”

Penn Accuses BioNTech of Skimping Out on Comirnaty–Related Royalties in Lawsuit

Fierce Pharma reported:

As sales from **COVID-19** vaccines continue to flounder, lawsuits associated with the products keep on piling up. In the latest, the University of Pennsylvania targets **Pfizer’s** Comirnaty vaccine partner BioNTech for additional royalties it allegedly owes to the university.

The litigation hinges on Penn’s patented **mRNA** technologies and a sublicense agreement BioNTech made to get its hands on the science, which it uses in Comirnaty.

Penn’s work in the mRNA space dates back to 2005, when Drew Weissman, M.D., Ph.D., and Katalin Karikó, Ph.D., made a Nobel Prize-winning discovery now known to be “foundational” to mRNA development and thus COVID-19 vaccines, according to the lawsuit. The university licensed the associated patent rights to multiple drugmakers and eventually BioNTech through a sublicense with another company. The agreement puts Penn in line for undisclosed royalties on net sales of licensed products.

In the lawsuit, the university accuses the German drug manufacturer of breaking its contract by skimping on the royalties owed under the agreement, claiming it has only paid “a portion” of the royalties that would stem from worldwide Comirnaty sales.

WHO to Convene Emergency Committee to Assess International Risk From Mpox Outbreak

Reuters reported:

The head of the **World Health Organization** said on Wednesday an emergency committee will be convened to discuss whether the current **mpox** outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo represents a public health emergency of international concern.

The current mpox outbreak in Congo has already seen around 27,000 cases, and claimed more than 1,100 lives, most of them children, since the beginning of 2023. The WHO said that 50 more mpox cases had been confirmed and more were suspected in four countries — Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda — where cases have previously not been reported.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that he had decided to convene an emergency committee in light of the spread of mpox in neighboring countries and the potential for further international spread within and outside Africa.

Tedros added that the agency had triggered the process for emergency use listing of the two mpox vaccines — Bavarian Nordic’s Jynneos and KM Biologics LC16 — to help accelerate access to the shots. Congo authorities had **approved** the use of both vaccines in June.

Lilly, Novo Nordisk Battle for Weight-Loss Market Lands at the Pharmacy Shelf

Reuters reported:

As **Eli Lilly’s (LLY.N)** weight-loss drug Zepbound gains ground in the U.S. against **Novo Nordisk’s (NOVOB.CO)** Wegovy, some doctors say their guiding principle for writing prescriptions is simple: which drug can my patients actually get at the pharmacy?

Lilly has quickly built a roughly 40% market share in the U.S. since it launched Zepbound in December, hitting 130,000 prescriptions for the week ending July 19, compared to 200,000 for Wegovy, according to IQVIA data published in analyst notes.

Data from separate clinical trials showed Zepbound leads to slightly higher weight loss on average than Wegovy, prompting some patients to seek the Lilly treatment. But both companies have been unable to produce enough of the medicines, taken weekly by injection, to meet unprecedented demand.

Some analysts have forecast the market for new weight-loss drugs could reach \$150 billion annually by the early 2030s.

Novo Nordisk Shares Dip as Wegovy Maker Posts Earnings Miss, Cuts Operating Profit Outlook

CNBC reported:

Novo Nordisk on Wednesday posted weaker-than-expected net profit in the second quarter and trimmed its operating profit outlook.

The pharmaceutical giant said its net profit came in at 20.05 billion Danish kroner (\$2.93 billion) in the three months to the end of June. An LSEG aggregate forecast had projected the figure would come in at 20.9 billion Danish kroner.

Novo Nordisk also trimmed its operating profit outlook for full-year 2024, saying growth was now anticipated to come in between 20% and 28%, rather than the previously expected 22% to 30% range.

Shares of Novo Nordisk tumbled close to 7% at one point before paring back losses and were last down 2.71% at 9:40 a.m. London time.

How Discharged Patients Can Carry Superbugs Home

Axios reported:

Discharged hospital patients can carry superbugs home and infect relatives or caregivers, even if they weren’t sickened by the bacteria, per a study in Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology.

Why it matters: The findings put an exclamation point on the concerns about the role hospitals play in the spread of **antibiotic-resistant** infections — and need to play in prevention, the authors say.

What they found: University of Iowa-led researchers examined more than 158 million insurance claims between 2001 and 2021 and found methicillin-resistant staph, or MRSA, in more than 424,000 patients.

What they’re saying: The researchers recommended hospitals improve testing for MRSA colonization, especially at discharge, even when a patient is asymptomatic.

The Defender Staff

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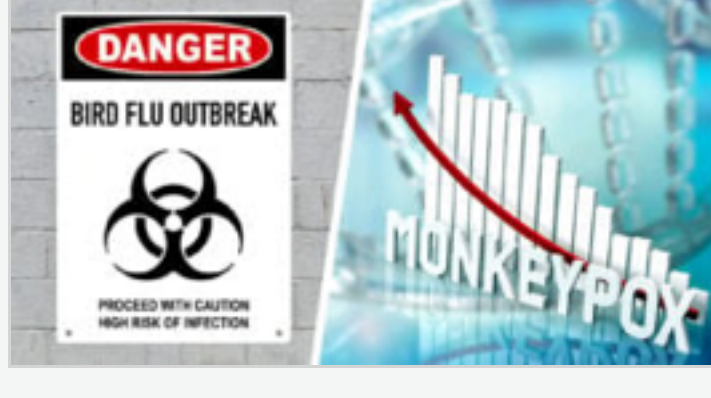
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